

way she can. This woman felt so much humility and shame throughout her life, it is amazing she has any courage or strength left at all. Although her account was sad and full of despair, not all stories of homelessness are as shocking. Many families live in the same predicament with shelter. I have been a homeless child who lived in a community shelter. I too have shared the same fear and sadness, the shame of society, and the gained strength of independence from surviving the loss of my home.

My social status throughout my life has never been one of wealth, but far from poverty. My family lived in a beautiful country cottage for twelve years, while raising two boys and launching a prosperous business. We lived the American lifestyle. There was always dinner on the table, and presents under the tree at Christmas. Our needs and wants were always met.

When I was twelve my parents began suffering serious marital distress. Unable to resolve the issues that can sometimes never be resolved, my mother told my father to leave. With no other suitable and stable means of income my mother, brother, and I began to have financial problems. Unable to pay the rent, our landlord promptly served us with an eviction notice. Within thirty days we had nowhere to go, and nobody to turn to; reluctantly my abridged family moved into a nearby motel for a week. I recall that week as one of the most disorienting times in my life. When I came home to our motel room I had no bed to call my own, no kitchen to make myself a snack as we were living out of an ice box, and nothing to call my own anymore, just the bag that I came with. I constantly questioned my mother where we were going to move and she always replied, "I don't know son." Two days before our stay at the motel was up my mother told my brother and I that we were going to move into a family shelter in Santa Barbara. My heart sank into my shoes. Shelters were for people who lived in alleys. Shelters were for the people who had no family. Shelters were for people who had no place to go, and we had nowhere to go. Within two days we had moved our remaining valuable possessions into an eight by ten room. The shelter we moved into had five bedrooms crammed with bunk beds, clothes, and children. Each room housed a mother and her children, and a large restaurant style kitchen which served as our collective eatery. The floors were dirty, the kitchen smelled of rotting vegetables, but I was with my family and we were safe. The first night we were there I tried with all my might to decorate my room as if it were my home, but the walls felt as if they were cardboard, liable to disappear at any moment. I laid in bed that night, struggling with my emotions, and wondering if I would ever have a home again.

The next day while commuting to school, I tried to decide what I would tell my friends. How could I gracefully tell them, most of whom were all wealthy, that I had moved into a homeless shelter? I had never felt so much shame, and I had never felt so small. While my friends were going out to dinner every Friday night, I was at my dirty shelter cooking macaroni and cheese watching my brother and helping him with his homework. I could never leave him alone, or family services would come and take us both away from our mother. While my friends' parents were having dinner parties, my mother was out working extra hours to save for rent, and to put food on the table. Many nights I had to come home from school to baby-sit my brother while my mom was out. This made a social life completely unattainable. We were not allowed any visitors inside the shelter,

so when friends came over, I shamefully told them to wait outside while I grabbed my things. They all asked where I lived and I told them I lived in an apartment complex, ashamed to tell them the truth. I had no extra money to spend on fun, as most of it was used on gas and maintenance on my car to get to school. My whole existence as a carefree teenager became the duty of a father to my brother, a confidant to my mother, and a starving student living in shame of his existence.

As time slowly passed by we became accustomed to the makeshift home we lived in. My mother continued saving money every day to move out, since we were only allowed six months to stay. I continued with school into my senior year, and was doing remarkably well. My brother, who used to be a shut in, began making friends at his new school in Santa Barbara. We trudged through day after day living in the shelter with screaming babies, and beaten wives, finding strength in places we never knew about. I began to cook more often, and enjoyed the simple satisfaction of serving my mother and brother dinner.

My mother became so strong and driven I couldn't help but to admire her courage and her grace in such a time of despair. My own strength grew as well and I began to see that everyone can have happiness if they choose to. I began to love the small family that lived in the shelter; the mothers, the babies, and the bond that we all shared by having nothing but one another. Coming towards the end of the sixth month, my mother found a home. She had finally saved enough money to move and our time in the shelter had come to an end. Six months of struggle, six months of humility, and six months of strength would now send us out into the world. Our dreams still intact, and our happiness soaring, we moved into our first house we could call our own.

Three years later I still look back upon that time in my life and smile. It was then when I truly found my strength and happiness. I had never been so close to my family until everything we had was taken from us. Becoming homeless can be the most horrible and humbling experience in a person's life, but it can also be the most empowering. Homelessness is not always bums on the sidewalk, it can be good decent families that have stumbled into hard times, unable to fight the power of money. My experience of being without a home was the most painful time in my life, but in a way it was the brightest. It was then I found myself and my strength. It was then when I found my family. It was when I had nothing, that I found everything. I will never forget our shelter on De La Vina street, and the person I found there.

Torin Rea is now 21 years old sharing a home in San Diego, CA, and working at one of the highest selling Nordstroms in the country. Last year he was the first 21-year-old ever to achieve the honor of top seller in the region. He is a legend in his own time.

#### A TRIBUTE TO 'COACH' DISNEY

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 21, 1997*

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Richard 'Dick' Disney. Coach Disney was a long time teacher,

coach, and friend to thousands of Escondido's children. His life exemplifies the hard work, dedication, and concern for our children that we expect from our Nation's teachers.

I submit for the RECORD the following article which chronicles Mr. Disney's life and achievements.

[From the North County Times, Jan. 15, 1997]

"COACH" DISNEY, 62, DIES AFTER COLLAPSING

(By L. Erik Bratt)

ESCONDIDO.—Richard "Dick" Disney's goals in life, his friends say, were to inspire students through athletics, build their self-esteem and make them realize that teamwork is the key to success.

He was about to bestow an award reflecting those ideals to a student-athlete at Orange Glen High School Monday night, but he never got the chance to do so.

Mr. Disney, 62, collapsed and died just before presenting the award—named after himself—to senior Matt Embrey, the grandson of legendary Escondido High coach Chick Embrey, now retired.

Mr. Disney, a trustee of the Escondido Union High School District and a former longtime coach and teacher at Orange Glen, was taken to Palomar Medical Center after collapsing at 8 p.m. from what his wife, Sharon, said was a major heart attack.

"He was the most wonderful husband in the world," Mrs. Disney said. "He died doing what he loved most, working with kids and trying to help them be the best they can be."

Mr. Disney, known to most Escondido residents simply as "coach," was a Point Loma High graduate. He taught at both San Marcos High and Escondido High before becoming a founding faculty member at Orange Glen when it opened in 1962. He was a physical education teacher, as well as the head football coach and athletic director for several years.

In 1967, he guided the Patriots to an undefeated record and the county championship, said Paul Moyneur, quarterback of that team and now a San Pasqual High teacher.

"I think the thing that stands out about him is that he genuinely enjoyed being around kids," Moyneur said. "He was very fair. He was very good at getting the most out of people."

Mr. Disney retired as head coach in 1972 but continued to serve as an assistant, as well as coach of the freshman team. At one point, he served as an assistant Moyneur, who was head coach from 1976 to 1984.

Mr. Disney's first wife, Sandra, died of cancer in 1980, and he later remarried. He retired as a teacher in 1992. Two years later, he won a seat on the high school board in a landslide. He was an active member, helping solicit campaign donations to get the district's \$43 million general obligation bond passed last June.

"I even called him 'coach' because the way he treated any kind of problem or concern was in a coaching way, never in a confrontational how to play ball with their youngsters so the children would not be ridiculed later in school," Gawronski said.

"He was, and always will be, a coach," said Charlie Snowder, school board president. "That is how he lived his life. He always promoted teamwork and individual excellence in everything he ever did in life."

Besides his wife, Mr. Disney is survived by his father, Richard V. Disney; his stepmother, Gladys Disney; two sons, Doug Disney and Richard Disney; two daughters, Darlene Coughlin and Dee Ann Disney-Jones; a stepdaughter, Wendy Leggett; and a stepson, Matt Wilson.